

It is here, in this
marginal space
(even if it couldn't
be recognized as a
"classroom" space)
that we begin the
story of how we
moved art education
from the periphery
to the center.

The Ceiling is the Sky: Affective Constructs, Event, and Community in the Marginal Spaces of Art Education

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This article sketches philosophical concepts of affect and event within the canvas of lived experience in a university art education teacher preparation course. We claim that by embracing architectural and metaphorically marginal spaces the course manifested transformative experiences for students, instructors, and community. We position and celebrate the often marginalized spaces of art education as potential sites of becoming through curricular rich environments and as thresholds of event for the educator of art within the community at large. Specifically, we describe the deconstructed space of the "classroom," the curricular arc of learning, and the occurrence of an unplanned, emergent, student generated event. We then consider the implications of this event for art education discourse through the figurations of murmurations and landings. Evoking the term murmuration as an expansive figuration of line of flight; we layer philosophical concepts and art education discourse to explore the notion of coming communities and event.

Art Education at the Periphery of the Center

It is not a matter of perception that the current educational landscape of K-12 schooling and universities has positioned the teaching of visual arts education at the margins of these institutional structures. Specifically, it has been our experience at the higher educational level that art educational discourse, especially PK-12 licensure for art educators, is considered peripheral by other faculty, administrators, and the public. In addition to these perceptions, the phenomena of “last resort” cannot be discounted as a

familiar with ABR, thus this new discourse further marginalizes art education research programs at the higher education level. In our experiences, arts-based research is seemingly viewed as not about making “real” art, but a way for PhD trained faculty to make “art objects” with their “primary” research (writing)—a different ball game.

Concurrent with these experienced perceptions of art educational discourse, we also encountered the marginal positioning of our research-practice in the built environments and political spaces of our art

school and fine arts department. The connections between art and the forms of its pedagogy, research, and discourse have diverse roots and manifestations in the hearts and minds of our particular faculty and school, which we suspect are also found in many other faculties and schools of art across the United States. We will not tackle those perceptual issues of art educational discourse through an examination of the factors that have led to the conditions we find ourselves in stated above. Rather, the



Figure 1. The paint-spattered floor of the Art Education room reveals the faint margins of a circle intersected by beams of light to visualize the possibilities of bringing the periphery to the center. Photograph by Nandita Baxi Sheth, 2013.

reason art students completing their BFA or MFA filter into programs of art education thinking wrongly that teaching art is “easy” and a way to cure their dread of securing future income. Furthermore, we encounter the art educational discourse of arts-based research (ABR) within the context of fine arts degree programs (BFA/MFA) being viewed as either a social science or a type of “writing” about art akin to historiography. Often MFA degreed faculty are not educated in and

focus of this narrative is on how art education operating from the margins is actually an advantageous position for the field. In essence, this essay is a report on how these authors in a particular context not only survived the conditions of perceptual and physical marginalization, but through a series of vignettes and descriptions presented here, paint a picture of how we reconstituted these marginal positions—redefin-

ing the capabilities and value of our field within our university community.

This paper attacks the contextual, architectural, and perceptual manifestations of marginalization by reclaiming those spaces for productive “events” as art education. As a result of our work, the spaces of marginalization have become generative openings for the reconsideration of the spaces of artistic inquiry, community building, and knowledge production. This article examines these three themes through a careful philosophical discussion of space and the event of art education, and by presenting the collected evidence of lived experiences from instructors and students during a set of foundational courses for state licensure that operated “from the margins.” Informed by the experiences and subsequent reflections of a professor of art education, a graduate assistant, and students, this article builds a case for the transformation of the explicitly marginalized spaces of art education into powerful engines for artistic inquiry and community, thus implicitly transforming the perceptual issues stated above.¹

We structure this essay as a series of vignettes, or what we call *landings*, in order to tell the story of how participants in a foundational course in art education came to rethink marginal spaces for our context. These landings will sometimes be in the first person, resemble “empirical” reports, inform our philosophical foundations, and reflect theoretical positioning in action. First we wade into this

structure, then “fly” or “murmurate” from landing to landing in order to reveal the tactical and intentional moves made to strike out from the margins. We then present evidence from student participants as descriptions of their transformations and “marginal operations” before concluding with our call for art education to celebrate working from the margins. We begin with a brief interlude, our first landing, where we present the case for successful marginal spaces in art and design education, before revealing the context of the physical space in which our particular course took shape.

Interlude: Murmurations, Affect, and Landings

Imagining Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) “lines of flight” as a murmuration², we propose the figuration of the murmuration and its inevitable eventual landing as an affective inquiry method for thinking through community and event. A murmuration, literally, is an assemblage occurring in nature, an event of *autopoie-*

²View a murmuration: <http://vimeo.com/islandsanddrivers/murmuration>



Figure 2. Peeling Grids. A table top that has been marked by a grid of cuts over time illustrates the marks of art making in progress and suggests a visual metaphor for the intersections of structure and dissolution. Photograph by Nandita Baxi Sheth, 2013.

¹ For another treatment of this situation and for a particular focus on the Saturday Art Course component of this article, see Holland (2015).

sis³ of individual beings moving in harmony with others, flying in utterly captivating undulating cloudlike formations that settle, land, and roost. Rolling (2013) suggests that these swarm formations can be a way of thinking about human interactions, saying:

...the murmuration of starlings chased, separated, aligned, and converged again and again--behaving together as one self-organizing superorganism with a pattern of collaborative and interchanging leadership carrying them from point A, to point B, to the point just beyond" (p. 90).

We propose that the figuration of the murmuration, which indicates movement, should be considered in conjunction with the movement's eventual pause or rest, which we refer to as the landing. The landing (of the murmuration) becomes an affective moment within linear time—a site of the in-between that is a threshold for the provocation of the occurrence and the eventual happening of an event. Additionally, the figuration of a murmuration is useful in understanding ideas of *affect*⁴. Just as a murmuration gathers, moves, rests, and disperses, so do blocks of sensations and intensities that generate wonder and awe integral to transformative experiences, otherwise describing what we evoke as affect. Murmurations offer a way to think through the generative potential of affects and their productive, lingering resonances. Reflecting upon our experiences, particular moments brought to life affective qualities of our art education space to expand out into the University-building at large. Put poetically, from the moment of no-space we crossed

³The word *autopoiesis* is derived from the Greek meaning of self-creation and was used by biologists Varela, Maturana, & Uribe (1974) to describe the organization of living systems. We use this word to help visualize the complexity of complex living open systems as we begin to define our own conceptualization of the *murmuration*. However, it is important to differentiate between scientific and biological definitions of *autopoiesis* and the Deleuzian project of productive/destructive creativity implied in the concept of *lines of flight*.

⁴While the scope of this essay precludes expansion on the growing discourse of affect theory, we direct curious readers to an excellent introduction, *An Inventory of Shimmers*, found in *The Affect Theory Reader* by Gregg & Seigworth (2010). Theories of affect, rather than functioning as a singular methodology, function as a way of thinking through intensities across multiple human and non-human entities and assemblages. Affect theory most certainly influences the theoretical direction and experiential intent of this essay, including the deliberate crafting and layering of image, text, and language to produce affect in the reader.

a threshold into all-space. Erasing margins, we redrew connections, both figuratively and literally. And now, follow us to our first landing: examples of other productive spaces we took as complimentary models of our own experiences.

Landing Zero: With Others—Contextualizing our Space

We now offer two examples of spaces that influenced and served as inspirational fodder for the conditions we found ourselves in after being reassigned a new space to run the art education foundation courses (which is elaborated upon below). As we planned our courses, we both understood implicitly that the architecture of educational spaces influences education itself, but were surprised to later find examples that legitimized our insight (Tischler, 2010). We did not consciously look to these two spaces, but upon reflection these places of inquiry mirrored our own in spirit. The first is MIT's legendary Building 20, a hastily built structure that occupants felt fostered magical creativity, and the second is the multipurpose structure of the Hasso Plattner Institute of Design at Stanford, known as the d.school.

Building 20, first built as a temporary structure, was constructed in 1943 during WWII to house MIT's Radiation Laboratory, but was not demolished until 1998 because of its pedagogical influence on the culture of the institution. During that time, the building became an incubator of innovation across disciplines, as MIT professor Jerome Lettvin (1997) explains:

The nature of Building 20 has nothing to do with its shabbiness. It's a building with a special spirit, a spirit that inspires creativity and the development of new ideas. From its inception, Building 20 was meant to be a place where different disciplines could co-exist, and many pursued wild ideas. (p.4)

Stanford's d.school, on the other hand, was intentionally designed with flexible and infinitely adjustable components that created permeable thresholds, borders and spaces that are purposely crossed, becoming incubators for emergent projects. It is an architectural

structure that celebrates the potential of the “unfinished,” as much as “finished” designs.

Whether intentional or accidental, both of these spaces, with their raw and unstructured environments, set the stage for, and metaphorically echo, a concept of *becoming*⁵ that is never final and always fluid. These structures physically build into space and place the “fluidity” required for generative discourse and innovation. We evoke these two examples (MIT’s Building 20 and Stanford’s d. school) because in the Fall of 2013, we found ourselves in a similar spatial milieu. The space of teaching we were assigned was, upon first look, an educational environment that was raw and unfinished. We immediately sought out how to define these qualities not in deficit, but as an opportunity for flexibility—just as MIT and Stanford had created. Upon deeper reflection, the experience the class was about to have was infused with our experience of the “occupation” of constantly adjusting our spaces of teaching and learning. In essence, our pedagogy echoed the metaphorically unfinished space with emergent potential, much like the physical structure we had to teach in. We now explain the physical context our university building presented us with, and then expand on how we adapted the space for the course.

The Physical Context of Our Building

The Department of Visual Arts Education at our Midwestern public university exists within a School of Art, which is a division institutionally and spatially located within a larger College. The College

⁵We refer here to Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) articulation of *becoming* as, “...a verb with a consistency all its own; it does not reduce to, nor lead back to, “appearing”, “being”, “equaling”, or “producing” (p. 239).

building consists of an older structure with a major renovation designed by Architect Peter Eisenman as part of the University’s plan to upgrade the campus with a master plan of buildings designed by noteworthy architects. This architects’ pastel-colored wrapped addition integrates the older structure seamlessly, purposefully conflates levels, and attempts to disintegrate physical departmental divisions (often serving as an example of postmodern construction). In addition to this energetic departure from traditional ivy and brick university structures, the entire building itself seems to be under constant construction and renovation as it houses a shifting constellation of undergraduate, graduate, and sub departments.

It is within this institutional and built structure that we found the Visual Art Education’s classrooms and offices in a state of flux. Our newly given classroom was hastily cleaned out, did not have a door, electrical outlets, or, at first, even tables or chairs. It is here, in this marginal space (even if it couldn’t be recognized as a “classroom” space) that we begin the



Figure 3. The Eisenman addition to The College of Design, Art, Architecture and Planning echoes the uneven grid structure in Figure 2 (above) and hints at the variety of non traditional spaces that exist inside the building. Photograph by Nandita Baxi Sheth, 2013.

story of how we moved art education from the periphery to the center. In the following landings, we present individual experiences by the participants that guide the structure of this essay and weave together a vivid tapestry of the affective experience of working from the margins. We start with the point of view of the Graduate Assistant.

Landing One: Being Under Construction

In accepting my role as a Graduate Assistant to a Professor of Art Education, I had many responsibilities. One was to maintain the art education storage

ed spaces on the fifth floor. Ultimately, our Visual Arts Education Department's archive, library, voluminous art supplies, worktables, desks, and stools were gathered in a white-walled windowless room, which was to function as our supply room. Stacks of boxes, almost falling apart with the weight of items randomly placed in them were scattered throughout. Metal cabinets lined one wall, padlocked shut, with keys mysteriously misplaced. Random furniture took up so much space that walking in the room required care. Over the summer, Art Education classrooms, storage rooms, and student offices had been appropriated to function

as rotating classrooms for a variety of disciplines, with renovations to construct our new spaces indefinitely delayed. We held the first few weeks of class in the cold, bare environment of a newly created multipurpose third floor classroom. Because it had to function for multiple classes throughout the day, we were unable to claim our space and develop a contextually relevant environment through the showcasing of evolving student and collaborative work. We needed to move into our new



Figure 4. A paint-spattered floor overlaid by a brick pattern serves as a visual metaphor for the time layered construction of pedagogy. Photograph by Nandita Baxi Sheth, 2013.

and teaching spaces. As I opened the door of the room that had been appropriated from another department as the new storage space for Art Education supplies, I realized the new space reflected a magnified perception of our position in the school. Earlier that summer (without the faculty present), the physical artifacts of our program had been moved from several classrooms and offices on the third floor to temporary storage areas, accompanied by the promise of newly renovat-

ed spaces—even though they were not completed.

Our new spaces were half finished, with renovations "on hold" until the end of the year. Our makeshift classroom, Room 5328, replaced individual painting studios whose walls were torn down, with Art Education literally supplanting previously allocated Fine Art space. Room 5328 had no real doorway—just a wall with openings, suggesting separations from one section to another. Boundaries were contested

and margins confused as we claimed our space from other College departments hostile to and sometimes resentful of our occupation. Deconstructed walls stood next to open electrical fixtures and construction debris. Wires and trash littered the floor, which was a visual accumulation of drips and spills from long graduated painting majors. A dismantled metal beam balanced precariously in a corner. The space resonated with a feeling of abandonment. Looking at the physical surroundings of our program and realizing that in a few weeks we would be preparing for 20 Art Education pre-service licensure students to prepare and teach almost 100 students in PK-12 grades in this very space, I realized we faced significant challenges.

Two floor-to-ceiling walls of windows that shaped one corner of the classroom space provided a glimmer of hope. Natural light and views of the university were inspiration as we began the task of painting walls, sweeping floors, and moving broken furniture. Working within the parameters of the institution, we fostered relationships with electricians, maintenance, IT, and custodial staff who continued to renovate the classroom. Work flowed around us as we held class “under construction” and our walls became an accumulation of student visualizations of personal art learning journeys, pedagogical strategies, and deconstruction of the wicked questions that haunt the education of art educators. Knowing the walls were temporary, we took advantage of this freedom to pin and draw, often using the walls as teaching surfaces. Instructors and students occupied and displayed personal responsibility for the space and it continued to shift its appearance with every meeting as we rearranged tables and chairs to suit the needs of each particular class focus and activity. Students could often be found using the room as a meeting, dining, and working space. Room 5238 became the site for the gathering of an art education community experiencing *being* in a world “under construction” *together*. We now proceed to Landing Two, to get a sense of the Professor’s intentions for the space and the philosophical matrix of operation.

Landing Two: A Pedagogy Under Construction/ Philosophical Precognitions of Room 5238

Henceforth, it is the map that precedes the territory—*precession of simulacra*—it is the map that engenders the territory and if we were to revive the fable today, it would be the territory whose shreds are slowly rotting across the map. (Baudrillard, 1995, p. 1)

What maps *preceded* this territory? What maps do I need to draw? What maps do I need to redraw, tear, cut, collage, pro-cess? I evoke this quote from Jean Baudrillard because it speaks to my sensibility of creating or disassociating the place art education had symbolically, and physically occupied with the “reality” on the ground. In other words, without the space to examine these philosophical trajectories in detail, I viewed the “real” situation of art education as malleable, and not tethered to its “myth” within my context; i.e. the symbolic marginality of the discourse would not be allowed to pollute my students’ building of agency.

If the image of art education as marginal, almost to the point of ignoring the discourse’s contributions to fine arts, proceeded “art education” as an action (what we “do” in our field), then I would counter-read this situation, invent a new map, thus creating a new territory (reality). Doing this from a marginal position would be easier, as art education was free from the “serious” musings of the fine arts departments’ meaning politics. I would use this philosophical precognition to shape not simply a symbol or “simulation” of art education, but shift the marginal into the center by creating moments and events for the students to interrupt the normal flow of the art discourse occurring in the College—giving them a new map of art education’s reality that was active and powerful in shaping what could be.

This re-drawing of the art educational map in my context began the year before, as I became privy to the information that the room I was teaching in would be demolished, and I would be moved in the Fall term to a new space. In that previous foundational course taught the year before, a space that had been for so

many years defined as the art education place in the College before I had even arrived, was selected by me for “decommissioning.” It was clear to me that the decomposition or demolition of the old art education classroom must be part of the course I was teaching. In that Spring term, I was able to alter the classroom to aid in the process of unraveling the old ways, which is perceived as baggage that caused the current marginal position of art education in my context.



Figure 5. A close up of masking tape peeling off a wall suggests the possibilities of unveiling generative discourse. Photograph by Nandita Baxi Sheth, 2013.

Via painting directly on the walls, installing “modifications” for various projects, and encouraging students to cut, draw, graffiti, etc., the space was continually altered. I viewed this event as a place for the reinvention of the foundational licensure courses as well as a physical good-bye to the old ways—the previous epoch was being replaced. But a strange affect crept over me as I viewed the constantly changing space. Perhaps the same way a foreclosed homeowner may strip their (now old and useless) home in frustration, I found this exercise unfulfilling. Because I thought of that space as destructive, an undoing

of the previous space art education occupied in the building, I was not contributing to a future solution for improving the perception of the program. In fact those who saw the space thought it was trashed, and that we did not respect ourselves.

Looking back I can partially agree with these statements. For me, space needs to enable *generative discourse* that rehearses possibilities for living as an artist-educator. That was not happening during the

“decomposition” of the old rooms. Saying goodbye to the space was not fulfilling and I left for the summer wanting a more productive and theoretical space for the next group in the Fall. Upon returning from a Summer experience that required building an art space in an abandoned grocery store in Berlin (creating a generative discourse in space), I was recharged and realized that constructive and generative qualities of space could facilitate the same in student work. I was immediately drawn into the

new challenge at our College of both creating a new space and also a new community of artist-educators.

The New Space

This new space was previously a painting studio, and had been a community of a different sort. Discovering that this was the new space given for the foundational licensure courses in art education, and with my intent after Berlin to engage with the artist-educators pedagogically on the terrain of transformation and agency, I sat in the space, looked at the tables, the walls (and lack thereof – it was a 3

walled space open to a hallway), an open ceiling, lack of any presence of a classroom in the classic sense (no board or place to write – other than on the walls themselves), the mass of debris from quickly vacating students of the previous semester, and evaluated this pell-mell. Without the spring and summer experiences I would have folded and requested a classroom elsewhere. But the space triggered an affective moment. I concentrated for a few minutes on the ghostly remains of the room...opened the blinds...let the sunlight stream in from every direction...sat down...opened my sketchbook and began to ask myself some questions. To what extent can I condition this built environment to support inquiry? How can I avoid the “destructive milieu” that seemed to close down the previous group? How can I allow the students *to gather* in common as *singularities*, rather than conforming to a ready-made identity I cut out for them (such as “art-teacher”)? How can I create a *coming community* that will *emerge* via an *event*? What is the road map? Again—what maps do I need to draw?

In contrast to Baudrillard’s (some would say) nihilistic reading of social change, I also had been drawn philosophically to the notion of “community to come” or the “coming community,” considered deeply by philosophers Giorgio Agamben (1993), Maurice Blanchot (1988), Jacques Derrida (1992, 1998), and Jean-Luc Nancy (1991). I decided this was an opportunity to live these ideas and move through and beyond Baudrillard. In addition, the philosophy of *event* as explored and articulated in the particular ways by John Dewey (1934/2005), Derrida (1984), Alain Badiou (2005), and recently by Slavoj Žižek (2014) began to possess my thinking in combination with the ‘coming community’ set of practices. I was immediately overcome with a flood of ideas regarding the opportunities that both the unfinished space and these philosophical lines of flight provided.

Putting together the theoretical milieu for this context required a reimagining of community that would take into account each person’s identity (or singularity). The building of a “community of singularities” can be described as a space where people meet *in common* generating a new collective engagement with a context. In other words, community is normally

conceived as an identity to assume or subscribe to, say becoming an “art teacher.” Here the assumption is we do not yet know what identity is needed, therefore we cannot decide in advance the type of person one must be, but rather out of *an event* a community is formed in context. A “commons” is created in order to allow each person to engage in living enquiry. The “commons” provides an emergent rather than prescriptive ground for the needed qualities situations require and a fluid space for the development of art teacher identity. This would combine for me the notions of event, with that of the community ethos informing my work.

Thinking of the building of a community in this context as an “event” is important. “Events” are, according to Žižek’s (2014) “first approach,” “. . . the effect that seems to exceed its causes—and the space of an event is that which opens up by the gap that separates an effect from its cause” (p. 5). This meant to me that the event would be what filled the gap between what art education was in the marginal space in this context, to what it could be when allowed to breathe the center’s air, and transgress the marginal border. Indeed, for Badiou (2005) an event is a “rupture in being,” a place where the truth can be “experienced.” Additionally, these ruptures are in a sense “outside of being,” or yet to be decided upon. I would argue Dewey’s notion of aesthetic experience also fits into this matrix of event I was drawing upon. For Dewey (1934/2005) an aesthetic experience is one in which the “transactional” subject experiences “works,” or lives events as moments of overcoming ruptures in the “equilibrium of life,” for which one must grow and change for the future. Events thought of in this way are vital to Dewey’s thought as they are what moves one forward and allows for the growth and change needed to improve life. I sought to perform a “bricolage” with Dewey, Badiou, and Žižek to form a matrix guiding the course as an event in what I would call a *praxisical* way. Let us move to the next landing, where we describe how we created one event which we hoped would spark the transformation.

Landing Three: The Event: “Art School” in an Art School

To embark on setting up the space, the course as “event” would take linking the philosophical *affects* of applying the ideas of “community to come” and “event,” thus suggesting the formation of a group of artist-educators together in common and generating the place where they could form the correct contextual events in order to bring the discourse out of the margins. I decided this room in the coming semester was the perfect space needed to engineer that moment. Through assignments, projects, debates, and readings I wanted to spark questioning in the students and a hunger to change the conditions.

Particularly, I had in mind for the middle of the term a provocation for the students to create, not as an essay or mini project, but in real time and space an ideal art school for art to take place. They needed to answer the call to figure out “what is the ideal school for art to take place” not the ideal art school. The switch in the question is to emphasize *art taking place* rather than inculcation into an art school/art world. This was important for me and informed the careful formulation of the rubric (see Appendix).

Students’ expression of agency occurred as a response to the prompt as they secretly organized a collective event as their response. *The Event of Art School within Art School* (which we refer to as *the Event*) was a collection of activities and happenings including not only the class but crossing disciplines to include students from architecture, art, design and planning, faculty, administration, and visiting scholars as both participants and audience. *The Event* required enormously more coordination and effort than simply completing the assignment individually.

The murmur took flight as the creative human energies of Room 5328 flowed throughout our College building, landing and occupying the “Grand Staircase.” The *Grand Staircase* of our building functions as a multi-level, multi-use pathway through the wild angled postmodern structure; serving as passage-way, exhibition area, and critique space for all four disciplines of the school. The space does not represent or function as a classical grand staircase entrance to a building such as the Supreme Court or MOMA in

which the grand staircase formally marks and creates an experiential threshold to cross from exterior to interior. Instead our building’s Grand Staircase is a metaphorical threshold to education, to entrée, to inculcation into professional discourses. The significance of the occupation of this particular space for *the Event*, which was a collective creative response to the *Envisioning Art School* prompt, held reverberations for the bodies involved as well as the institutional structure itself. *The Event* structurally and metaphorically brought art education from the periphery to occupy the center (albeit briefly) and announced the current class was not going to allow themselves to be marginalized in the conversation of what makes an art department at the College. Let us now proceed to the landing of the students’ responses to this event.

Landing Four: Resonances of Experience

“I have a feeling something really important happened today, something I will never forget...” (Student DY, a stairwell conversation recalled, November 13, 2013)

Garoian (2014) reflects that events of teaching and art are, “...lived, self differing moments” that “enable a differential seeing and thinking that constitutes a politics of becoming-other” (p. 394). The resonances of *the Event* are embodied as significant formative experiences for pre-service teacher expression of agency, autonomy, creative adaption, and expansion of the project assignment; flying beyond the limits of the assignment, the physical space of Room 5328, and even the members of the class itself, reaching for inclusion and dissemination of ideas to the wider community of architecture, design, planning and art learners, educators, and leaders in the building. Students’ subsequent reflections on *the Event* reveal affective understandings of the event as being *more than itself*.

The following excerpts are from students’ Weekly Reading Responses reflecting on the Event:

I can hear murmurs of a conversation beginning in all corners of the College and as bell hooks says, “Words impose themselves, take root in our memory against our will.” (hooks, 1994, p. 167). I

can't quite put my finger on how large of a ripple our event/ class is, but I can feel something big has begun. Something none of us could have foreseen" (Student KC personal communication, November 13, 2013).

I believe our class has started a wave of emotion and reflection in the College. We've gotten our peers to really think about their education in art school and how they feel it's impacting their practice. And this change is happening, right now. It's an awesome feeling to know that you are not part of the change, but you are the change. (Student KW, personal communication, November 20, 2013)

In addition to the happening of *the Event* and their written reflections upon it, art education licensure students, independent of the syllabus, and as a group, generated an assignment for themselves. At the end of the year, the students of Room 5238 crafted a wooden box with the word "murmuration" delicately transferred to the lid. A viral murmuration video had been presented to the students as a figurative extension of Deleuze and Guattari's "lines of flight." The "title" of the box thus acknowledges the impact of the figuration on student learning. Touching the unbelievably soft to the touch wooden box and reading the title I realized I held a murmuration (of sorts) in my hands. Opening the box I found that the students had individually crafted artistic articulations mapping both the architectural space of the room and tracing the pedagogical activities that had been experienced. The box was a collection of traces of experience; murmurs that encapsulated each student's affective resonance of the space of our learning together, of our classroom under construction (see Figure 6 for an example of a Student Drawing). The artistic visualizations in the box articulate both as singular works of art (created by each student-artist) and also as a shared work coming together in the container of the box ultimately forming a creative visual, individual, yet at the same time communal, final project based reflection on their experience of the spaces of learning in the foundational art education course.

As an "art object" the murmuration box and its contents could be conceived of as a microcosm, which for a moment, for the person engaging with it, manifests emergent and ever shifting possibility for the marginal spaces of art education. As many of these students have now entered into meaningful work environments including community art, education, public library and corporate; the resonances of their experience in Room 5238 in the Fall of 2014 and the rippling impacts these individuals/singularities might in turn have upon new *communities to come* remain to unfold in a *future to come*.

Landing Five: Confessions of a Teaching Artist: Or How I View Social Sculpture as Inquiry, and the Event of Teaching as a Work of Art

5A: The Uses and Abuses of Social Sculpture

"Moulding processes of art are taken as a metaphor for the moulding of society, itself an organic enti-

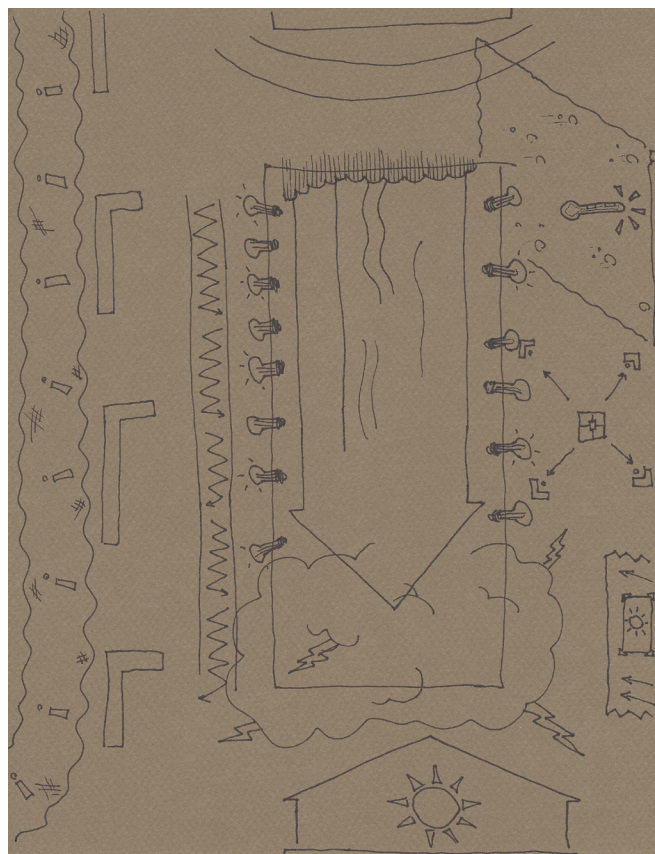


Figure 6. Student drawing created as a visual response to the learning space of the art education room. Anonymous, 2013.

ty; thus we have Beuys' SOCIAL SCULPTURE" (Tisdall, as cited in Rosenthal, 2004, p. 26).

I (the professor) must confess a debt beyond the working theories of the coming community (Agamben, 1993; Blanchot, 1988; Derrida, 1992; Derrida, 1998; Nancy, 1991) and event (Baidou, 2006; Derrida, 1992; Derrida, 1998; Žižek, 2014) to the art and pedagogy of Joseph Beuys. Beuys' notion of social sculpture in particular was the guiding force behind my decisions to make the foundational courses in art education into a "work of art;" an idea I describe shortly. For Beuys, social sculpture was a metaphorical working method, and as Tisdall states above, a literal process of sculpting (moulding) society. Joseph Beuys arrived at the notion of Social Sculpture through a long process and deep reflection upon his own past and "life course" (Holland, 2011). Beuys' work grew out of the Fluxus group, which celebrated "the event" (much the same way we are using the term in this essay) and the transformative nature of art. He came to realize that the potential and necessity for art, specifically an expanded definition of art's performative dimensions, must be *active, focused*, and play a *central* role in creating a just society. As Beuys' work grew and changed, it became connected to radical social change in order to transform social connotations in certain environments, the role of capitalism, and what art was for his time.

At the risk of abusing the concept of social sculpture we must be diligent and re-inscribe these tender notions to our context. I am arguing for a reading of social sculpture that puts the concepts of event to work, forces the issue (as an event), and engages in constructing the potential for a new community arrived at *in common*. For Beuys, social sculpture engaged with audiences in conversations and attempted to 'sculpt the event' to get the participants to rethink the role of art both in *conversation* (as the social sculpture) and in *actuality*.

By positing that the event would cause a rupture in the 'being' of the community, Beuys hoped that the reconstituted community of artists (or whomever) would *work* (not simply think) differently thereafter. I used this pedagogical trajectory to inform the quasi-structuring of the foundational courses and its

classroom as a space for an event to take place. The first extension of social sculpture I undertook was to slow it down as an experience; have social sculpture occur class by class, reading by reading, reflection by reflection instead of a singular event. In essence the whole course put together would be the careful sculpting of the community in common meandering slowly through the semester.

Another aspect of social sculpture was to rethink art education as a site of learning. I set about creating a starting place and crafting tactics and strategies to make art education become more than a thing, or object to be studied, and sought to make it an *experience* to be a lived site of inquiry—a *work of art*. The event of the course, as a social sculpture—thus a work of art, is also a site of inquiry. The second extension of social sculpture I undertook was to make it be an inquiry methodology. If we define inquiry as the *process* of knowing that shapes our *concept of being* (opening epistemological and ontological issues), not a simply a mental process, but the actual transformation of a situation, then inquiry as 'an event' is described as such. Social Sculpture as an inquiry methodology that requires a coming community and an event, but also time and reflection. As a social sculpture, and thus a work of art, this foundational experience unfolds, enfolds, and unfolded, activating art as inquiry. The event of teaching is social sculpture, a work of art, and inquiry method.

5B: The Event of Art Education: Beyond How to Make a Classroom a Work of Art

It is important to understand Room 5328 as the site of work—specifically a work of art, and, rather than a product or thing, it is an active moment that can "do." If we define art as: *an act of naming an event within a cultural context—a human behavior evolutionarily "hard wired" that foregrounds the world as it appears vs. the world as it is*, then the marginal space becomes the landing site for such works of art. However, this work of art is "taken" with each student as they enter other spaces, transform their own thinking, and generate futures in the wider context. The work of art is begun in social sculpture, inquiry, and forms an act of *becoming*, not being. In this sense

cultivating a sense of art education beyond any object of art, or even works of art (a la Dewey) as a way of becoming, and an inquiry process that expands the classroom into the world.

As mentioned in the previous section regarding the empirical transition of the space, the canvas had to be prepared, not to be molded to my will, but as a site of study, reflection, discussion, and “event” as art education. The notion of event is an important precursor to any description of the intent. According to Manning and Massumi (2014), “A mode of existence never preexists an event” (p. 11). Therefore the importance of a community to come, collect, or curate (see Groys anti-philosophy) an event *a posteriori*, as in this essay, becomes part of the dissemination of the event. This presents a threshold for the reader to now transgress.

Conclusion: The Ceiling is the Sky⁶

The affect of marginalized spaces, rather than producing a sense of dread over risks, disrupting the blossoming of art events, or creating places of “surrender,” instead must be viewed as thresholds to build or “sculpt” (a la Beuys) “events” as art education. Art education as a work of art (Beuys) then becomes the active pursuit of metaphorical spaces, places of landing, transactional zones such as room 5328 that in turn make the *affectual moments* (art education as a work of art) representable, simulate-able, transferable, translatable, and transitional to any place of production. In other words, art education has an implicit advantage that needs to be made explicit: *namely that the very marginal status that has been regarded as something to be overcome should instead be celebrated, be undergone to accumulate affects for generating futures.* We must pay attention and grasp the event of art education’s wandering ways, migra-

tional planes of existence, and marginal spaces not as contained in specific places, but rather exploding as events with the mission to transform everyday life (Baidou, 2006; Derrida, 1998; Derrida, 1992; Žižek, 2014). Furthermore, art education as a discourse must celebrate its marginal status metaphorically, physically, and philosophically to build community and actions to combat the very marginality it finds itself in without destroying that very foundation of marginality. Imagine, for a moment the possibilities of considering that *the ceiling is the sky*, in which boundaries shift and blur to become invitations and expansions. It is in this situation that the event of art education to take place, to land, to fly away, to form murmurations succeeds in creating the new, discovering affects, and claiming an event. In conjunction with this proclamation of the happening of art we need to see the beauty in wind, hear the sounds of flux, and feel the texture of murmurs in order to experience the affects as generative discourse rather than relying on signs, structures, and prescribed places to define the time and space of art and its education. It is in generating events of art education from the margins that we can truly master the notion of becoming beyond relying on a sense of overcoming foundational situations, times, or ready-made performativities and announce the undergoing of the event of art education.

Notes

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⁶ From the song Spirited Away (Lily & Madeleine, 2014, track 6).

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Appendix

Dr. K. Holland

ARTE 6010 Autumn 2013

Project 2 Rubric

Three Projects: [Due Week 7, 11, 15]

15% [15 pts.] (*Projects subject to change as course warrants)

Schooling Vs. Education Project
Envisioning Schools Project
Agency Project / 21st Century Art Educators Manifesto

1. An Inquiry into Envisioning Art School:

Project 2

This is a week to reflect and synthesize material from the course thus far – a pause (we still have readingC but it is light).

It will be expected that this project be a rigorous, contemplative, and art based experiential look at the second third (weeks 8C11) weeks readings, class discussions, theories, and research trajectories you have done on your own. Please note *you are also free to all the course issues and topics to inform this project.

00

You will create a **Visual Material Cultural Artifact Experience** that answers the question:

What is the ideal school for art to take place?

All mediums of communicative action are accepted (all 'text,' from 1D (writing) to 2D to 4D, to video, performance, etc.)

Rubric:

1. Artist statement (one page or less)
2. Evidence of course materials referenced/cited/used
3. Evidence of synthesize of materials
4. Evidence of reflection/contemplation of material
5. Evidence of collegial engagement

***This assignment will be unveiled on Weds
& Friday November 13 & 15**